

# SOCIAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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## PEACE STUDY COURSE READY

The peace study course developed around the Richmond Convention peace resolution has been published in pamphlet form and is now available from the Christian Board of Publication, 2700 Pine Street, St. Louis, Missouri. Price: 15 cents per copy, \$1.20 per dozen. The Convention recommends it for study in all our churches.



## SEEKING THE AUTHENTIC VOICE OF THE CHURCH ON PEACE

Throughout the last three days of February a group of nearly three hundred men and women met in the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, on one of the most important tasks which has confronted any church group in recent years. They were there seeking the authentic voice of Protestant churches of the United States on questions relating to war and peace. They had been appointed by the highest judicatory powers in each communion and they were convened under the dual call of the department of International Justice and Goodwill of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the East Asia Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. In their deliberations they were conscious of the influence of two great world Christian conferences of recent date - the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work held in Oxford, England in 1937, and the International Missionary Council at Madras, India, in 1938. They were conscious too of a new concept beginning to take form and substance in the Protestant world - the ecumenical, or worldwide church. In the group were many men and women who had attended one or both of these conferences and some who are carrying responsibilities in forming the new World Council of Churches, thru which the unity and universality of evangelical Christianity can be demonstrated.

The business immediately before the conference was consideration of a "Memorandum" issued by a group of Christian leaders representing the churches of Eastern Asia, North America & Europe who were called together at Geneva, Switzerland by the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches in the face of impending war in Europe. Representing wide experience in international law, international politics, and international economics, as well as religion, these men and women framed a "Memorandum" to the churches of the world, in which they set forth their convictions as to what the Christian churches of the world ought to do and say in a world at war. The purpose of the Philadelphia meeting was to study the relevance of that document to the American churches.

Representing the Disciples of Christ in the gathering were: Robert T. Beck, A.C. Brooks, Geo. Walker Buckner, Jr., F.W. Burnham, Gaines M. Cook, James A. Crain, Arthur J. Culler, Mrs. Robert A. Hoan, Harold E. Fey, E.K. Higdon, Myron Taggart Hopper, Joseph B. Hunter, Harold L. Lunger, J. Edward Loseley, Miss Bertha F. Park, Harlie L. Smith, and Miss Rose Wright. Also present in other capacities were John W. Harms, and Dr. C.C. Morrison. All of those named took important parts in the discussions and in the framing of the reports of the several seminars to which they were assigned.

The conference divided itself into six seminar groups as follows, the local church and world peace, missions and the world crisis, the responsibility of the church in relieving suffering caused by war, the church and the conscientious objector in war-time, the churches and American policy, and the ecumenical movement and the peace and war problem. In a gathering where there were many theological points of view present, many differences as to the part which the churches should play in war-time, many differences as to the issues involved in the war in Europe & many points of view as to methods of procedure, it is not to be expected that agreement would be arrived at easily. Drafting committees wrote and re-wrote statements again and again before they were acceptable to the seminars whose views they were designed to state. Then the findings of

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Analysis of decisions handed down by local tribunals for Registration of Conscientious Objectors up to November 16, 1939, as published in the K-H News-Letter Supplement of December 8, 1939, shows that 2,143 cases had been decided covering the United Kingdom. Some 299 persons, 14 per cent of the total, were registered as conscientious objectors unconditionally, 943, or 43 per cent, were registered as conscientious objectors on condition that they undertake civil work or training. Some 509 agreed to assume non-combatant duties with the armed forces, and 400, 19 per cent, were denied status as conscientious objectors. This report shows that 1242, or more than 50 per cent of the total cases disposed of, were either excused from all form of service or assigned to civil work or training. If to this number be added those whose pacifism was recognized to the extent of excusing them from military duty and assigning them to non-combatant service, the total establishing a sufficient degree of pacifism to win government recognition & exemption from actual combat service totals 81 per cent. By far the largest single group seeking exemption was from London, with Scotland and Wales running close second. A similar leniency has been shown by courts set up to determine the status of enemy aliens. Out of some 40,000 examined up to November, 1939, only 358 were ordered interned.

#### UNITED CHRISTIAN ADULT CONFERENCES PLANNED

One of the newest and most vigorous developments in Christian education in recent years is the United Christian Adult Movement. Growing out of a conference of adult church leaders which met at Lake Geneva, Wisc., in July, 1936, the leaders wisely refrained from launching an organization. The movement rather seeks to enlist the adult leadership of the church in achieving certain objectives through their own churches and through such recognized cooperative organizations as the International Council of Religious Education, the federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, state & local councils of churches and Christian education. The movement gained impetus through conferences held at Lake Geneva again in 1937 and 1939. The program for the summer of 1940 calls for a series of regional conferences to which adult leaders of all denominations are invited for training and study. Among the regional conferences planned are, Nova Scotia, at Antigonish, August 11-24 in cooperation with a seminar group studying the famous Nova Scotian cooperatives; Central Atlantic, Massanetta Springs, Va., July 15-22; North Atlantic, Northfield, Mass., July 20-27; Niagara Region, Dunkirk, N.Y., August 24-31; Great Lakes Region, Lake Wawasee, Ind., July 7-13; Ozark Region, Hollister, Mo., August 8-11; Upper Mississippi Valley, Frontenac, Minn., July 29 to August 4; Rocky Mountain Region, Geneva Glen, Colo., July 22-29; Pacific Northwest, near Portland, Ore., June 3-9, and Pacific Southwest, date and place not yet settled. Rates for the conferences will vary with regions and locations, but in general the minimum will be from \$15 to \$20 per person, including board, room, and registration. Those desiring may secure, at slightly higher rates, private accommodations in some of the camps. For complete information write Dr. Harry Munro, 203 North Wabash, Chicago, Illinois.

Some time ago President Roosevelt announced his intention of raising the national income to ninety billion dollars annually. Figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, based on the findings of the National Resources Committee show that a national income of 100 billion dollars annually is not impossible, provided the level of family incomes can be raised \$500 a year above the national average of \$1250 - \$1500 income group, and provided the expenditure pattern of that group can be maintained in the increase.

In 1935-1936 there were slightly more than 4,000,000 families that had incomes averaging less than \$500 per year - \$466, to be exact. How did they live? They spent \$203 on food, \$90 on housing, which means slightly less than \$17 per month for food and slightly more than \$7 per month for rent. On household operation they spent \$57, \$35 on clothing, \$22 on medical care, \$15 on automobile purchase and upkeep and \$44 for miscellaneous purposes, including house furnishings, personal care, recreation, education, etc.

There were 2,865,000 families in the \$1250-\$1500 income group, with incomes that averaged \$1364 per family. Families in this group spent an average of \$487 on food, \$230 on rent, \$149 on household operation, \$123 on clothing, \$57 on medical care, \$93 on purchase and upkeep of automobile, and \$177 for miscellaneous items. They still had \$34 for gifts and taxes and \$14 for savings. The average income of this group (\$1364) is about the same as the average that would have obtained if the income of all families, rich & poor, had been pooled in 1935-36 and their expenditures equally divided. There were more than 13 million families whose incomes were below this level and who were unable to meet their current expenses from income.

If these more than 13 million families could be brought up to the income level of the \$1250-\$1500 group, it would increase consumer expenditures by \$8,300,000,000, of which more than two-and-a-half billion would go into the pockets of farmers, stock raisers & dairymen for food, \$1,380,000,000 would go into housing, almost a billion into clothing, nearly \$900,000,000 into household operation, \$871,000,000 into automobiles & \$1,750,000,000 into medical care, furnishings, personal care, education, recreation, & the like. If it were possible to raise the income and with it the expenditure pattern to the level of those with incomes of \$2000 to \$2500, consumer expenditures would be increased more than 22 billion annually. Of this amount more than 5 billion would go to farmers for food, nearly 4 billion for housing, 2½ billion on household operation, 2.7 billion on clothing, and 3.17 billion on automobiles, leaving \$4,650,000,000 for medical care, furnishings, recreation, education, and the like.

While manufacturers, politicians and businessmen talk about foreign trade and are concerned over what may happen to our markets in Japan, China, Mexico, and Latin America, we have right here at home, in the more than four million families who are living below the level of minimum subsistence, the making not only of our own prosperity, but the making of a better and a healthier nation. The needs of our own poor neighbors is our greatest market!

The recent White House Conference on Children in a Democracy quoted figures to show that nearly three - fourths of the families of the United States do not have sufficient income to give the children an adequate diet, that between 6 and 8 million children are members of families dependent upon government aid or some form of relief, that 40% of city families live in houses without central heating and one family out of six in houses unfit for human habitation or in need of major repairs. One-half million children under 16 have left school to go to work. Some 10 million school children have defective vision and 1½ million have impaired hearing. About 250,000 mothers & their babies have no medical care at birth or immediately thereafter. (from The Nation)

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With the passage of the law subjecting federal, state & local governmental employees to income taxation, the treasury department has ascertained that in 1937-38 there were 3,788,516 persons in some form of governmental employ, local, state or national, and that their wages & salaries totaled \$5,506,874,000. Of these, 344,269 were federal civilian employees drawing \$1,505,723,000. The military personnel numbered 322,529, with an annual pay of \$353,453,000, bringing the total federal personnel to 1,166,798 and the total payroll to \$1,859,176,000. Of these, 303,863 were receiving \$1000 per annum or less, 1,047,819 received \$2500 or less.

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The Indiana State Motor Vehicle Bureau reported 16,316 suspensions of drivers' licenses during 1939. Of these, 3,020 were for intoxication, either first or second offense. Other major causes of suspension were, driving without a license, 1,661; reckless driving, 3,669; speeding, 3,820; miscellaneous causes, 4,239. Under Indiana law any person showing more than .05 concentration of alcohol in the blood is deemed unfit to operate a motor vehicle. With nearly one-third of the suspensions due to intoxication, it would be interesting to know to what extent alcohol entered into such causes reckless driving, speeding, etc.

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That war is again making the United States purveyor to the fighting nations is indicated by figures on 1939 net income (after deducting taxes and deficits) released by the National City Bank of New York and quoted by Time (Feb. 12). U.S. Steel, which in 1938 lost \$7,717,454, cleared in 1939 \$41,226,039, 70% of it in the last quarter, after embargo was repealed. Republic Steel lost nearly 8 million in 1938, but cleared \$10,671,343 in 1939, 63% in the last quarter. National and Inland Steel increased their profits 88.9% and 122.7% respectively. Du Pont increased its earnings from 50 Million to more than 93 million. Westinghouse Electric jumped its earnings from 9 million to 13 million. Caterpillar Tractor made an 85% increase. Figures quoted in last month's Newsletter showed increases for airplane manufacturers and petroleum companies ranging up to 1800%.

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The Nation reports that as a build-up for the film "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," the RKO-Keith theatre in Washington, D.C. conducted a contest for a perfect 'double' of Lincoln. When it was discovered that the winner was a Negro the presentation ceremonies were called off.

In the February 1940 Survey Graphic, Survey Associates present the third in the series of "Calling America" which began in February 1939 with a 166-page issue entitled "The Challenge of Democracy Reaches Over Here." The current issue is entitled "Homes - Front Line of Defense for American Life." President Roosevelt's famous dictum that one-third of the nation is ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed, Fortune in its housing issue in 1934 and Catherine Bauer in her "Modern Housing," show that one family out of three in the United States is adequately housed. Minimum standards of health and decency require that human habitations should be provided with running water, adequate fire protection, sufficient light & ventilation, room for privacy, and an inside toilet. In 1930, 6 out of 7 rural homes had no electric lights, 5 out of 6 had no running water, 11 out of 12 were without bathtubs, and 2 out of 3 had no telephone. In 1934, 2 out of 3 city homes had no hot and cold water, 1 out of 6 had no inside toilet, 1 out of 4 had no bathing facilities, and 3 out of 5 had no central heating arrangements.

Since it is economically unprofitable for a family to obligate itself for more than one-fifth of its income for rent or to pay more than a total of two years income for the purchase of a home, it is evident that in any housing shortage those families in the lower income groups must suffer most severely. There are 6 million urban families with incomes under \$1,000 per year. Their income available for housing is less than \$20 per month. For this group slightly more than 10,000 dwellings were constructed annually between 1930 and 1937. This group needed a total of 180,000 new dwellings annually. The income group from \$1200 a year to \$1799 a year needed approximately 115,000 new houses each year during this period, but construction provided fewer than 10,000. When we get into the higher income brackets the picture changes. The income group from \$1800 to \$2999 per year, able to pay from \$30 to \$49.99 per month for housing had 45,000 new houses provided annually, but could have used 70,000 more. For the group having incomes above \$3,000 nearly 70,000 new dwellings were provided each year during the period 1930-1937, which was approximately 20,000 per year more than was actually needed.

According to Consumer Incomes in the United States, published by the National Resources Committee, American family incomes in the United States in 1935-36 were distributed as follows:

Under \$1000	42 per cent
\$1000-\$2000	37 per cent
\$2000-\$3000	13 per cent
Over \$3000	8 per cent

The Committee also found that no group below the \$1250 to \$1500 income bracket met its expenditures out of current income in 1935-36. This means that more than 42 per cent of the families of the U.S. 'went in the hole' during that year. With 92 per cent of the population receiving incomes of \$3,000 or less, and with 79 per cent having \$2,000 or less, it becomes apparent that we must provide something like 300,000 houses a year over a period of years that will sell for \$4000 or less or rent for from \$10 to \$20 per month.

the various seminars had to come before the plenary sessions for discussion and approval before they were handed to the editing committee for final revision. That substantial agreement on the major problems was achieved is a tribute to the growing unity of spirit and purpose of the church.

No detailed statement of conclusions can be made prior to release of the official report of the conference. However, those who sat through the three sessions each day and participated in the work of committees which formulated the convictions of the conference could not escape the sense of deep conviction on certain points.

First. The churches must do all in their power to help create a public opinion which will be effective in keeping the United States out of war. Not for selfish purposes or to save our own skins, but that the United States may be in position to offer helpful mediation to stop the slaughter now going on in Europe and Asia. There was clear recognition of the fact that our munitions sales to Britain, France, and Japan have already compromised our neutrality and that we share in the war guilt.

Second. Peace by negotiation rather than by military victory is imperative if even greater horrors are to be avoided. The churches must begin at once to prepare the minds of the people for such a peace. Peace by negotiation is a possibility, in spite of propaganda statements issued by various belligerents. The war in China has reached a stalemate where neither Japan nor China can win a clear-cut military victory. Resort to total war in Europe will wreck European civilization. Peace can be had in both Europe and Asia on terms that will give substantial justice to all concerned.

Third. The churches must begin to prepare the minds of men for some sort of world organization which will make future wars impossible. What form such a world organization will take the conference did not presume to say, but its formation will involve the surrender by individual states of certain aspects of sovereignty, such as those surrendered by the several states in the formation of the United States of America. In a closely related and interdependent world it is unthinkable that nations should insist upon being the sole judge of their own actions.

Fourth. The churches must help to prepare the people of the United States for the necessary economic and political sacrifices which such a world organization involves. Monopolies of raw materials, markets, gold reserves, living space and food supplies constitute a continuing challenge to underprivileged peoples to resort to force to gain a fairer share of the world's goods. Blackades, embargoes, quotas, tariffs, trade and currency control are as much instruments of war as are cannon and bombing planes. The 'have' nations of the world must be prepared to share with the 'have-nots' if war is to be eliminated from our civilization.

Fifth. The church must become increasingly conscious of the universal supra-national character of its fellowship. It must stand heroically against the tendency of modern political states to deify themselves and to demand of their citizens an allegiance which men can give only to God. The political state is not the creator of justice, but its guarantor. There are certain freedoms which are inherent in the divine heritage of the church and when the state invades the realm of conscience it is the duty of the church to refuse obedience. When Christian men and women, following the clearest spiritual insight they have, refuse to participate in war such a stand, without pronouncing judgment upon others who may be able conscientiously to render such service.

Sixth. The missionary and evangelistic tasks of the church are of supreme importance. Christianity stands alone in the world today as an international fellowship. It is the one institution remaining which mediates the love of God, the sense of brotherhood, fellowship, loving service and human concern across national boundary lines and battle lines. In a world in which almost every other institution has succumbed to the pressure of nationalism the church of Christ is finding its voice and challenging the souls of men to supreme allegiance to God and to a recognition of their fellowship in Jesus Christ. Relief of the suffering caused by war and aid for persecuted minorities are tasks that the church must joyfully accept as a part of their ministry to human suffering.

Seventh. These obligations are not concerns that can be gotten rid of by assuming that they will be taken care of by some sort of world organization of churches or by denominational leaders. Rather they are responsibilities of local congregations of Christians everywhere. It is the duty of pastors, teachers and church leaders to bring these problems to the attention of the rank and file of Christians, to help them to think their way through them to conclusions that are definitely Christian and which will help to create a social climate favorable to the growth of Christian idealism. War and international illwill have their roots in individual and community prejudices. Selfishness in local church competition, greed in business, economic injustices and assumptions of social and racial superiority are local counterparts of national attitudes which create international friction and war.

SECTION 562 P. L. & R.  
Department of Social Education & Social Action  
222 Downey Avenue Indianapolis, Indiana